

The Shadows
Weeks Hall's House
New Iberia, Iberia Parish,
Louisiana.

HABS No. La. 75

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Louisiana

Historic American Buildings Survey
Richard Koch, District Officer
712 Royal Street, New Orleans, Louisiana.

WEEKS HALL'S HOUSE
(Shadows on the Teche)
New Iberia Iberia Parish Louisiana

Owner: William Weeks Hall

Date of Erection: 1832

Builder: David Weeks

Architect: Unknown

Present Condition: Good

Number of Stories: Two and attic

Materials of Construction: Brick, with slate roof,
originally cypress.
Wood joists and floors.

Other Existing Records:

Owners Records.

Book containing wills from 1800 and genealogy
and other documents in the Trust Department,
National Bank of Commerce, New Orleans, La.

Micro-film of these records and of house;
Department of Archives, Louisiana State
University, Baton Rouge, La.
Copies in National Archives, Washington, D. C.

The Architectural Record. March, 1924.

Old Plantation Houses in Louisiana by
William P. Spratling and Natalie Scott.
William Helburn, Inc., New York. 1927.

House & Garden. July, 1928.

Lyle Saxon, Old Louisiana; the Century Co. 1929.

Know Louisiana, compiled by J. G. Ewing for the
Louisiana State Highway Commission. Printed 1933.

Great Georgian Houses of America, Volume II.
Architects Emergency Committee.
The Scribner Press, New York. 1937.

New Orleans and Its Environs by
Italo William Ricciuti.
William Helburn, Inc., New York. 1938.

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WEEKS HALL'S HOUSE
(Shadows on the Teche)
New Iberia Iberia Parish Louisiana

No plantation house in the state represents so truly the development of Louisiana's architecture, nor is the fine understanding that exists between these old buildings and their surroundings better seen than in this pink brick house, situated on the banks of the Teche in a grove of oaks, whose shadows give it its name; architecturally, The Shadows is the culmination in the 1830s of many different foreign sources which developed into a distinctive type of house that we associate with the Louisiana country.

The plan is the old French arrangement of three rooms across the front with a porch and in the rear two smaller rooms separated by an enclosed porch. The stairs to the house are on the west end of the front porch, enclosed with blinds. A small enclosed stair leads from the rear porch to the hall above. This small interior stair, perhaps an afterthought, persists in these early houses. The rear porch, which served as a passageway to the other rooms, must have been closed in shortly after the house was built as can be seen from the brick work, the level of the floors, and the windows. Darby, Labatut and Chretien in this neighborhood have the same plan but successive changes in their exteriors are seen. The short

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cement columns of the first floor of Darby and Labatut with the spindle wood columns of the second floor have developed into a column through two stories at Chretien and The Shadows. On the last named, the roof is gabled instead of hipped as in the earlier houses, probably furnishing one of the earliest examples of such a roof, an innovation of the Americans in Louisiana. The cornice is the complete Doric order from Vignola instead of the moulded brackets of Darby or the cornice of Chretien which is so reminiscent of the American-Colonial before 1800. The interior trim as well as the plaster cornice of the main room, like Chretien, is of the late Greek Revival while at Darby there is no such intimation, and at Labatut only the very beginnings of the Greek Revival. Curiously there are no exterior glass doors, but wood panelled doors in place of shutters and with transoms that might have been added.

The architect is not known but with so many details similar to Chretien, some forty miles away, it is probable that they were done by the same man and certainly by many of the same artisans. The brick was made on the place, a soft red that has mellowed with time; originally a coat of yellow wash, that is now all but gone, must have given a different appearance. Again like Chretien, the brick is laid in regular bond, every fourth course a header, except the front

which is of Flemish bond. The trim is painted white and the sash, red. The interior walls were white with red base boards, which are very high and with many mouldings, all typical of the better houses of the early Greek Revival. The floors are of pine but the entrance hall originally had a black and white marble floor that has been relaid in the rear hall. The mantels are a simple Doric variation of wood, painted white, and in the lower hall are iron firebacks probably from Philadelphia, while the marble mantel in the upper drawing room no doubt replaced an earlier one. The roof is now of slate, but was originally of shingles.

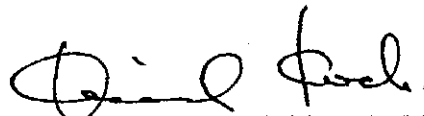
The house was completed in 1832 (according to the date on an old downspout) by David Weeks who bought the property on September 20, 1825. His father, William Weeks, was born in England in 1743, came to Maryland and married a Swazie from New Jersey. The Swazie family were royalists, and after the Revolution moved to the Felicianas. William Weeks must have followed them there for he died in St. Francisville on October 22, 1819. The American State papers verify various grants of land to him by the Spaniards, and to his son, David, who received a grant from the Spanish Governor Carondelet for Weeks Island in 1792. Here the family fortune was made in sugar, and The Shadows was later built as a town house.

The house was restored in 1922 by Armstrong & Koch, the writer being a member of that firm. No changes were made to the building except to add a bath and dressing room on the second floor and a kitchen downstairs. The two side doors of the triple arches on the rear had been bricked up with small transoms not in keeping with the building, and they were removed and doors inserted, copies of the original one from the middle. The cornice, railings, stairs, etc. were restored from markings on the building or from existing pieces. The gardens were laid out by the owner, W. W. Hall, a great-grandson of the builder, and their sympathetic arrangement has helped greatly to set off the building. Originally the entrance, of which an old photograph still remains (a wooden gate with turned posts) was on the axis of the house; a path led up to the porch through an avenue of cypress, but these trees were crowded out by the oaks; later the entrance was moved to the side so as to give more privacy and a sense of open space. The pool was an old Victorian hot house and the camellias in the garden to the East are part of an old box garden that has disappeared. The statues in the new garden were collected from plantation houses of the period and many similar ones are seen today in the tropics.

The kitchen and a servants building were in the rear, but as these were in a ruinous condition and did not help the composition of this area on the banks of the Teche, they

were torn down and the brick used in the restoration.

Two water colors of the original Shadows,
by Persac in 1861, are in the house. Figures taken from
Godey prints pasted on them, give an idea of this plantation
town house in its early days.



Richard Koch,
District Officer,
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
IN LOUISIANA.

February 28, 1941.

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